

ETHICAL ISSUES ON THE POSITION OF THE YOUNG GENERATION OF INTELLECTUALS IN EASTERN EUROPE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND CORRUPTION

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*Abstract: Nowadays, a large part of European academic staff, but also American, believes that ETHICS fell from its high position, exclusive, of the educational programs, entering a certain obscurity. And it is true that today only a small part of specializations in higher education have as an object of study "Ethics" or "Business Ethics". There are few students who have clear notions about **morals and morality, deontology, discrimination or corruption**.*

For these reasons, we believe that an evaluation of the position of students and graduates of higher education institutions to certain ethical issues related to the present and future of their careers is welcome.

We interviewed therefore a number of 1.073 students, master students and recent graduates (up to 5 years after graduation) in Eastern Europe, to answer questions related to issues of discrimination and corruption, both while conducting studies and thereafter. Based on the interpretation of these responses, we developed a study which we will summary present as an article.

Key words: ethics, morals, corruption, discrimination, young generation

1. Introduction

In the last time the main discussion is more about a qualitative reform of contemporary society based primarily on massive promotion of youth and its involvement in the most important activities of political, economic and social management. But these goals can't be satisfied just by training more efficiently youth generation in all activities, but also by a better preparing of them.

Unfortunately, in schools (first we talk about the higher education), preparing the young generation in accordance with the principles of ethics and moral is disappointing. As would find out the specialists in the United States and the European Union, in the last time "Ethics" or "Business Ethics" as study subject, fell from their high position, an exclusive one, being somehow neglected in the education programs. The famous French philosopher Jean Jaques Rousseau said, during a debate in 1773, that: "People learned but without any morality are of course the most dangerous

agents for corrupting a society and for decadence of a state. This means that the younger generation must be prepared to take action against issues of corruption, discrimination and gender equality.

A study in 2015 made by Transparency International on corruption, ranks countries in Eastern Europe on 58-70 seats out of a total of 168 countries from around the world discussed (see www.Transparency International: Perception Index corruptive 2015 - Report and Info graphics). It follows that in these countries, over 50% of administrative and business activities are suspected of being affected by corruption, and overall, more than 6 billion people live in countries where corruption is perceived as going beyond a level of 60%.

Of course, corruption is almost always accompanied by the discrimination. Students are introduced to this phenomenon much earlier, since the initial phase of their training. Period university should find them ready to defeat any attempt to discriminate, but unfortunately it is not. This is because universities fail to create environments tolerant and non-discriminatory attitudes. Although many of them have complex internal provisions on gender equality, anti-discrimination, respect and tolerance or free expression, they are very little known in academic environment. "From the study on student perceptions of discrimination was revealed that although many are considered to be tolerant (76.52%) discriminatory attitudes are quite present among them. Among vulnerable groups to which the students have less tolerance we find persons infected with HIV / AIDS (46.73%), people of different sexual orientation (39.53%), persons of other ethnicity (37.32%)". (Poll: Care este nivelul discriminării și al discursului instigător la ură? Mălina Barbu www.romaniacurata.ro). Marked by the consequences of corruption and discrimination, but also by the prospects for mediocre income, much of the graduates of higher education in Eastern European countries are tempted to find jobs abroad.

Annual Report of the World Economic Forum, ranks Romania on the 109 place of 144 countries of the world to the ability to retain values in the country. An unsatisfactory place due to precarious offers on labor market for young graduates. This drain of "gray matter" goes hand in hand with the government's inability to create facilities for young specialists and attracts to the local business area. Therefore, we aimed to investigate the position of students, MA students, and also of young graduate regarding the phenomena of corruption and discrimination, both during and after completing their studies. We chose four countries (Romania, Turkey, Macedonia and Moldova) because their education systems are quite similar and with the exception of Romania, they are involved in an advanced process of accession to the European Union. Our work was facilitated by the fact that we had more MA students of the mentioned countries, who were happy to help us in carrying out the proposed actions.

2. The social dimension and the way to modernization of higher education

Reformation of higher education is an issue which is for a very long time on the agenda for cooperation on the old continent. In 2006, the European Commission emphasizes that: "Universities are key players in Europe's future for the successful transition to a knowledge-based economy. However, this crucial area of the economy and society requires a strong restructuring and modernization in detail, if Europe wants to not lose the global competition in education, research and innovation" (European Commission 2006 Report, p.11).

This type of approach links modernization of higher education to the fulfillment of social and economic goals. Thus, the political debate on the social dimension of education and its educational process optimization has become an extremely topical issue. In such circumstances, it requires a reconsideration of policies related to education development through the achievement of major goals, such as:

Supporting access to more people (and especially under-represented groups) at a higher education level;

Finding ways of sustainable financing, of support schemes for students such as grants, bank loans and other facilities of non-pecuniary in order to facilitate equitable access and ensure, as pledged in Bologna, a equal representation of the social distribution company;

Achieving a fair and inclusive education system that places emphasis on equality terms, but also on equality treatment;

Achieving a graduation rate as good, this is based on a higher graduation index among the students. The ultimate aim of achieving these objectives is to realize a "European area" of higher education, attractive and modern. European states policy is to adopt measures leading to a higher education flexible and efficient. By adopting new "technology" of without frequency learning, e-learning and the launch so-called "open universities" demonstrates that modernization is a continuous process that must adapt to contemporary realities more efficiently.

Of course in the end, all attempts to modernization and improvement of education in Europe should be subject to competitiveness criterion as namely, to train specialists to become more performing at work in the shortest time. In this direction, however, graduates from certain countries face difficulties when they want to hire in other countries. These weights are based both on nationality and the prestige of graduated school. Higher education in Eastern European countries is generally low ranked and because of this, graduated students are often disadvantaged when they want to secure a position in relation to those in Western Europe.

3. Position of the young generation against corruption and discrimination issues

The phenomena of corruption and discrimination leave deep scars in the consciousness of the young generation. They are general phenomena, offensive, which affects the consciousness of young people, representing in fact, a violation of human rights. The academic environment is perhaps the area most favorable for the manifestation of ethical principles and the fight against disturbing phenomena. Values and principles that are trying to be promoted in this environment are: respect and tolerance, benevolence and care, professionalism, personal autonomy, honesty and fairness, academic freedom, responsibility. Often, however, the universities fail to create environments that promote tolerance and non-discriminatory attitudes and do not transmit to students these values and principles, despite the fact that education is the main catalyst which should contribute to the activation of tolerance and solidarity among citizens.

Therefore, universities in Eastern Europe are not very transparent or actively involved in terms of providing information about the representation of vulnerable groups in higher education or about concrete actions taken by responsible factors. For example, over 60% of students surveyed during this study would treat with indifference both forbid relationship between teachers and students, and cheating on exams.

4. Equality opportunities and access to employment

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" proclaims the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights since 1948. This means that the rights and freedoms are recognized to all individuals without distinction. The same is true for graduates with higher education.

A significant player that influences international policies in Europe is the Council of Europe made up of 47 states. In the document "Recommendations for a quality education for all" is stipulated that quality education should be ensured without discrimination to all, and to students in particular must create equal access and equitable in programs of study and also their entry into the labor market. It also emphasizes that the public authorities have a capital responsibility to create optimum environment training but also in the placement on the labor market.

But in reality, is not the case. In the modern world as a remedy of free competition, increasingly manifest desire of rank, to devise rankings, from the sport also to the academic. The emergence of international organizations dealing with the composition of classifications of higher education institutions (on grounds sometimes subjective) is also manifested by promoting an attitude of restraint towards academic environment in Eastern Europe. Based on such rankings more or less eloquent, is already creating a handicap for the eastern graduates taking up jobs in Western countries and also often in their own countries. This follows from our case study.

Rankings compiled by various national or international organizations we must recognize creates a handicap, but also have a positive side, namely that of stimulating competition 'inter' and 'intra' university. In Romania, for example, based on criteria proposed by the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research universities were classified into categories (A, B, C, D or I, II, III, IV). For the first two categories, there are a number of facilities such as more subsidized places at license and doctoral studies, generous research funding, better visibility. Normal up to a point, but what do we do when we see that in the last category are all private universities and state universities, but newly established or those in small towns? How do we encourage the development of private education, how do we help the smaller universities to increase, since according to the directives of the Council of Europe, the number of students in eastern countries would have to double in coming years?

5. The position of the younger generation of students and graduates from Eastern Europe towards corruption, discrimination and equal opportunities. Case Study

5.1 Research results

The sample covered by our study was composed of 1073 subjects from four countries of Eastern Europe, as follows: Romania (421 subjects), Turkey (233 subjects), Macedonia (214 subjects) and Moldova (205 subjects). Our choice was made based on the existence of similarities related both to structure of education systems and also the transition stage education systems specific to each country toward a model efficient and modern, European type.

Study was conducted by a team of students and MA students from the University "1 December 1918" Alba Iulia (Romanian, Turkish, Macedonian and Moldovan) from February to June 2015, and was based on a questionnaire composed of 16 questions with three, four or five responses.

Questionnaires were grouped into two broad categories, namely: the first referring especially issues relating to the corruption and the second to issues of discrimination and equal opportunities. Both categories comprise aspects of the proposed themes at general level (at the state level or international) and private (at school, or workplace).

5.2 The corruption, as it is perceived by the younger generation of East European intellectuals

Respondents' attitudes towards corruption are not oneresignation. They recognize the existence and dimensions of this scourge and a 73% are agree that all governments (left or right) are corrupt or accept the (see fig. 1). Over 62% of them consider that to remove this scourge it takes a harsh reaction of governments manifested by legislation and effective control. A percentage, but quite

significant, 37.84% consider that there are other ways (long term, we say) based on increasing levels of culture and applying the principles of business ethics (see fig. 2). Neither public officials are not spared by our subjects, who believe that they receive undue benefits due to the desire for the enrichment of low wages in the administration, but also because habituation. Behold 26% of respondents consider that it is customary in their countries (see Fig. 3). To the question: "In which of the areas of activity often gives the bribe?" Opinions are divided: over 34% believe that the state sector, and 42% believe that in all sectors, while only 3.82% believe that their country does not happen this (see fig. 4). Therefore, the group of optimists is very limited.

Referring to the economic development of indigenous companies, the view of most respondents (over 82%) is that they are obliged under certain circumstances to bribe (fig. 5). It is also interesting their opinion about multinationals (fig. 6) who is believed that more mimics the compliance with ethical principles (although promotes a whole policy based on ethical behavior) and in the alternative, they violate these principles in order to obtain economic advantages (over 80% of subjects). 61% of them say if they would ask for money to be employed in a multinational were willing to give him (fig. 7).

About work (or school or company), young people would be willing to a lesser extent, to bribe to take an exam or pass an interview (fig. 8 and 9), but would be very lenient with those who copy in exams (fig. 10), 60%.

5.3 The discrimination and equal opportunities problem from west to east?

Discrimination and equal opportunities remain some challenges of contemporary society. Besides the classical aspects, begin to appear and new trends of manifestation of these phenomena, namely, those of differences in approach between Eastern and Western Europe. Young people in eastern feel disadvantaged in competition with those in the West, both in finding jobs and also level remuneration. Sometimes these disadvantages are emerging even when they are in their own country. Therefore 71% of respondents believe that you can more easily find a job in their own country, if you graduated abroad (fig. 11), while 72% believe they have less chance of getting a job in the West, than a job autochthonous (fig. 12). Respondents perceived reasons are that schools have an older western tradition and education programs are more practical and realistic. Desire of young graduates to hire in West is based on getting a good salary (60%), but also for better working conditions 34% (fig. 13).

Respondents also believe that there are problems of discrimination both in universities and also at the workplace. Discrimination based on sex is the most frequent, so that 76% believe this (figure. 14), while 62% are not bothered whether there unlawful sexual relationships between students and

teachers (fig. 15). A good thing is that 88% believe that discrimination can not be removed by harsh legislative measures but rather through education and raising the cultural level of society (fig. 16).

6. Conclusions

Corruption and discrimination, here are two notions of concern to the younger generation of students and graduates from the east. Their position on these issues is not passive one but rather active. But there are some reservations that are generated by imperfect systems that operate in their countries. All are aware that governments are not still able to stop corruption, and that beyond the political orientation, they do not differ in any way from each other in relation to corruption. Civil servants are greedy and claim undue benefits, and firms in such a climate, during their evolution are obliged to bribe. For these reasons, young people consider that to eradicate or at least minimize these phenomena need tough legislation and repeated checks. Neither multinational companies are not seen with sympathy in this regard. Young people do not believe in the effective implementation of ethical codes or in "moralistic" propaganda. Rather they believe that these multinational mimics the compliance with ethical principles. Instead, their attitude to the occupation of position in a multinational firm is more nuanced. Only 14% would agree to pay a sum of money, while 40% said categorically NO. The remaining 46% are undecided.

About cheating in exams, there is an unjustified tolerance for cheaters, perhaps in a spirit of "band", tolerated as a nonconformist behavior tolerated, protester.

Passing from corruption to discrimination, we can say that young people have a conscious position towards this phenomenon. I mean, if corruption, they say, can be combated by tough laws and controls, can't say the same thing about discrimination. To combat discrimination it takes some time, understanding and patience, increase cultural and educational level of a whole society. The most common type of discrimination in higher education are that of gender practiced in a way somewhat hidden but perceived by students. Teachers practice such discrimination thus favoring certain individuals. Surprising is the fact that if a student disallowed relations with a teacher in general, it would not matter to anyone. There are, however, manifestations of discrimination and otherwise. Universities should be "key players" in the transition to a uniform European school. But in the countries covered in this study it does not happen because they are not yet established specific conditions to ensure this transition. Here are some reasons:

Financing is not done in a manner beneficial to all universities

Indicators used for access to finance from the start are discouraging private institutions and the smallest size institutions

Financing from European funds are complicated and the criteria for grants awarded are not the best. Only filling out an application of funding research for example, is a very big effort, an "adventure" in fact.

Business is less stimulated to collaborate with higher education institutions. Universities do not have clear and consistent policy of attracting companies for cooperation

Education programs are overloaded and poorly targeted to the practice. The practice is often formal and unimportant. Then does not exist teachers prepared for this (specialist) to oversee and guide students in practical activities. These lessons are "loaded" in the task of some teachers too requested and they are not very well oriented in this direction

Very high effective number of students per teacher impedes good communication between the two sides. Often feedback only happens at the exam

Lack of quality criteria by which to grant funding from the budget, but bad implementation "of the Quality System" in some universities

Here are just some of the reasons why educational institutions in mentioned countries are classified as non-performing. In these circumstances, of course those graduates of these institutions will not have equal opportunities to fill positions with those in Western Europe. Even in countries of origin, local graduates think they are disadvantaged in competition with those who have graduated from a school abroad, and when they have to compete for a job "outside", they are doubly disadvantaged: the first time they graduated in the East and the second time because they are citizens of some countries in Eastern Europe. Here it outlines a kind of discrimination (or at least unequal opportunities) namely, that between West and East. A "longitude discrimination" we would say.

Of course there are measures to eliminate these shortcomings as soon as possible, is important, however, that responsible factors not to mimic REFORM but TO REFORM.

7. Figures list

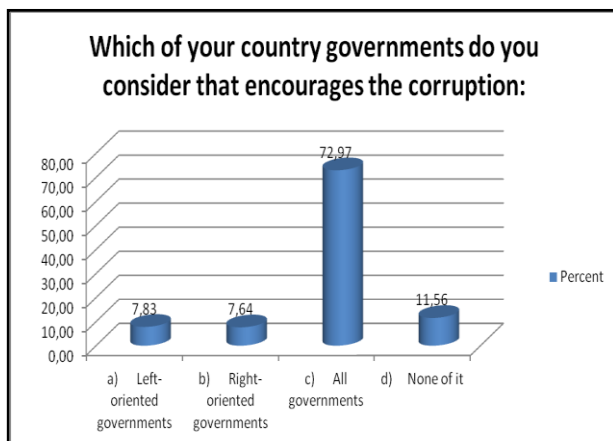


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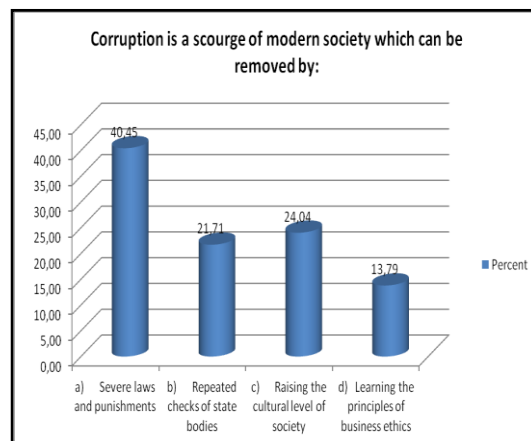


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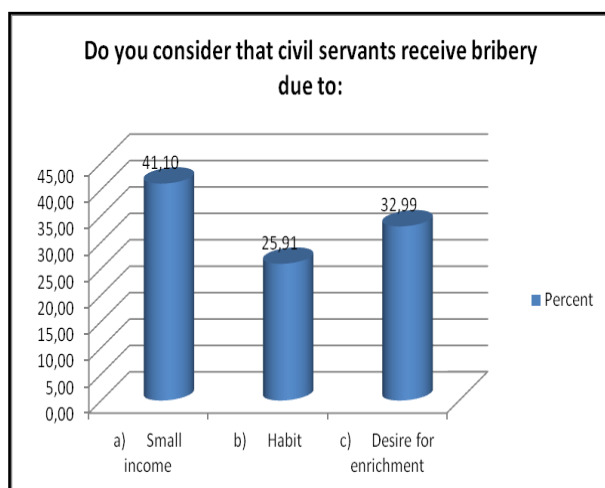


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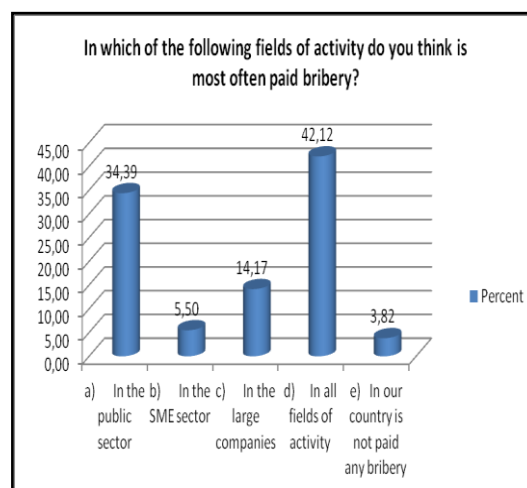


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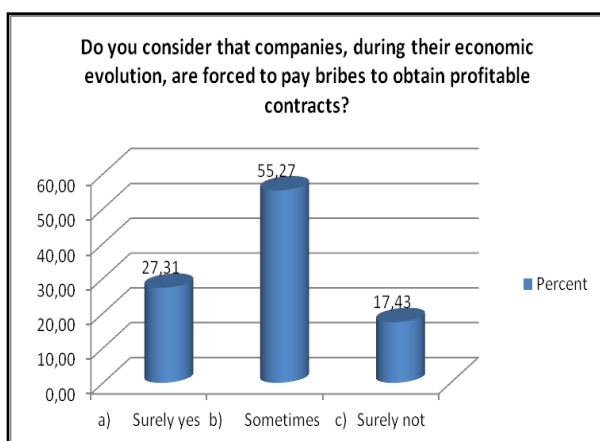


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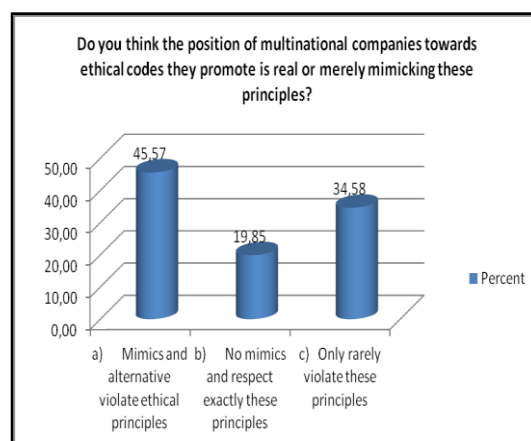


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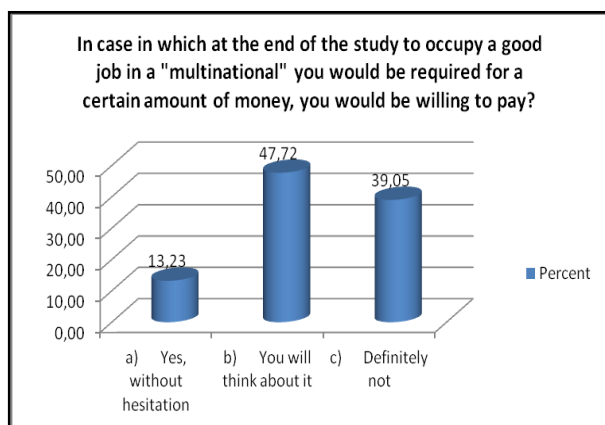


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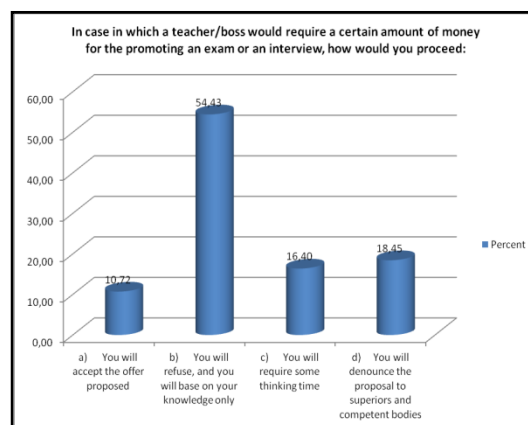


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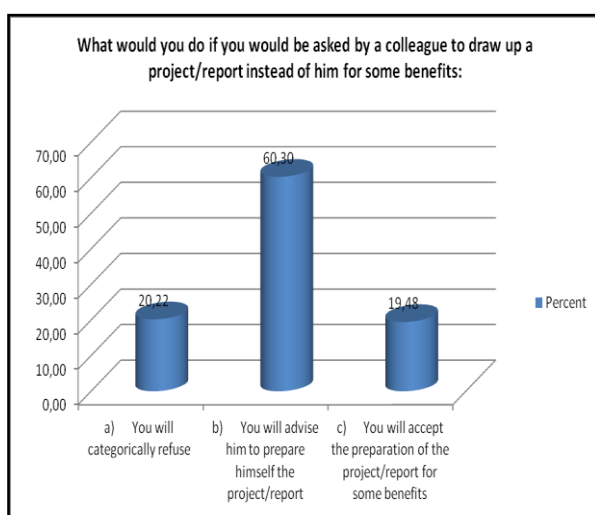


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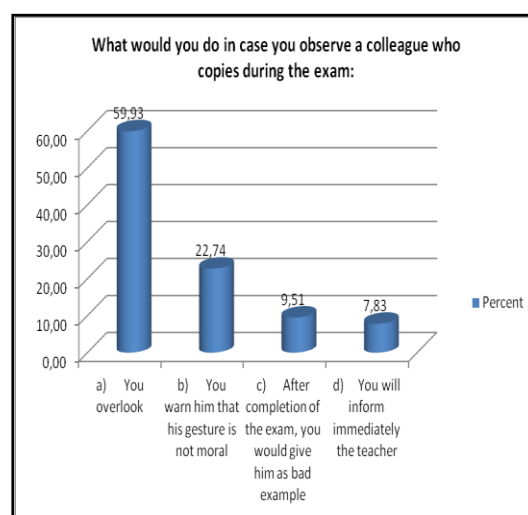


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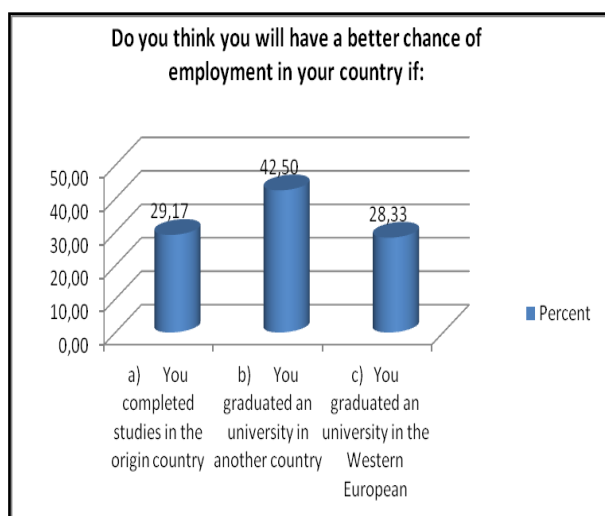


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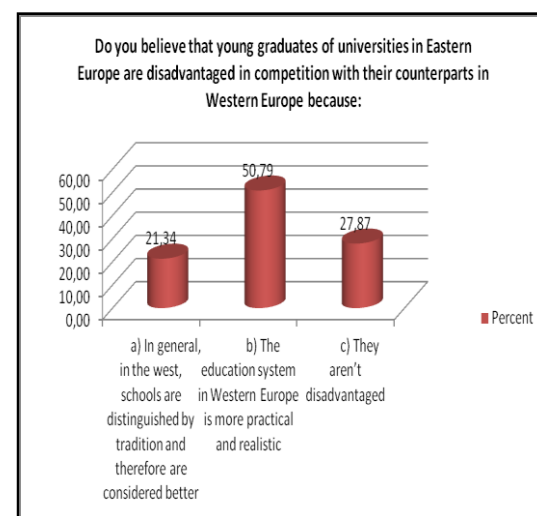


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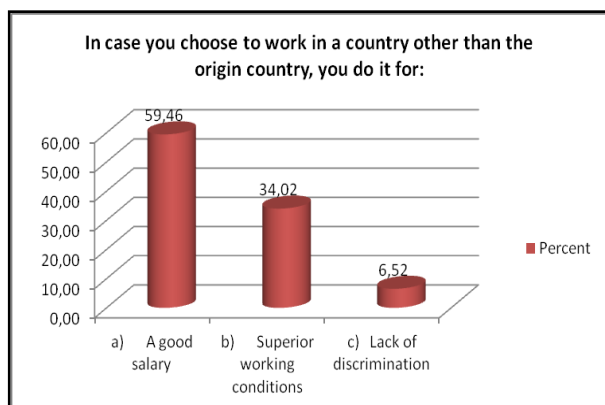


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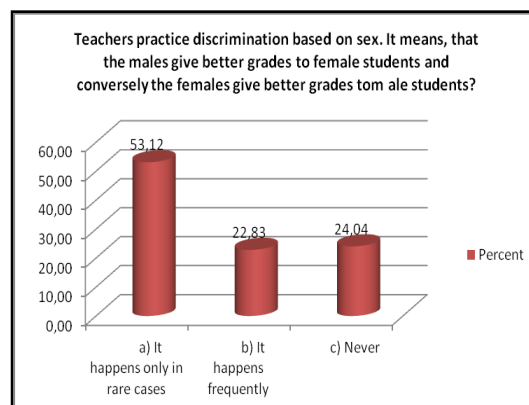


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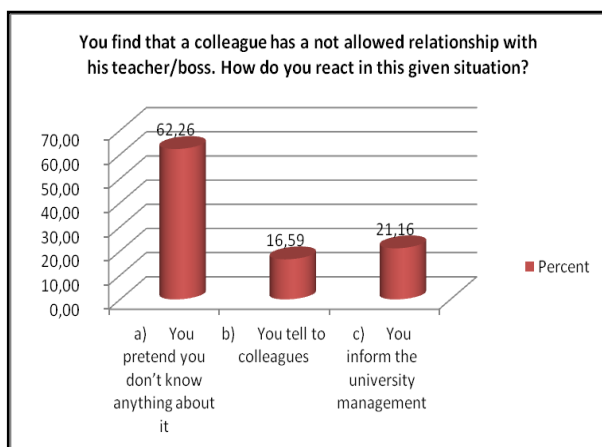


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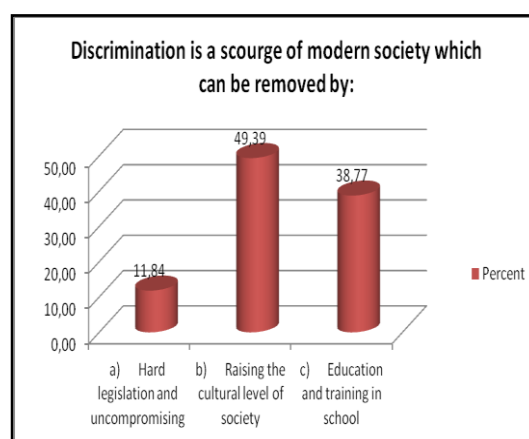


Figure no. 16

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